1: Kelly E-5 (1930) 1934 Northern Paiute
Surprise Valley

ETHNOGRAPHY OF THE SURPRISE VALLEY PAIUTE

BY

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The following report is based upon field work among the Northern Paiute or Paviotso of northeastern California during the summer of 1930. The investigation was financed jointly by the University of California and the Bureau of American Ethnology.

The names Paviotso, Paiute,[1] and Northern Paiute are used interchangeably in this report, and unless otherwise indicated, all statements apply specifically to one band of such Paiute known as the Gidū'tikad[2], or Groundhog-eaters. Some forty members of that band are now living at Fort Bidwell, Surprise valley, Modoc county, headquarters for the season's field work. As the result of a five-day visit[3] to the Klamath Indian reservation, some scanty material was obtained from members of a related band, formerly of Silver and Summer lakes, Oregon, but now living on that reservation near Beatty.

It seems likely that the account of material culture here contained is as complete as can be made at the present time, for there is little of the old life left. A few roots are dug in spring, and berries are gathered in the fall, but seed gathering and the old hunting methods have fallen into disuse. A few baskets, mediocre at best, are to be seen; some rather nice skin dressing is done; most infants are carried in cradles; but aside from this, statements by informants are the sole reliance. Little was obtained on political institutions, probably owing to paucity of development rather than to fragmentary information. Such is not the case with religion, which is still more or less flourishing. At least shamanistic cures are in vogue, and a number of the older people frequent the sweat-lodge upon occasion, there to pray to the sun. The meagerness of the data must be attributed to the very

[1] Not to be confused with the Southern Paiute who are also known in the literature as Paiute.

[2] At private expense, borne by myself and by Miss Elsie Kober, of Fort Bidwell.

3: Angulo & Freeland D-5 (1926) 1929
NR13 Northern Paiute NR13

Sweating, and Sweat-Houses.

515 751 783 The subject of "sweating" as a partly religious, partly social, partly hygienic process, is an important one in the aboriginal life of America. There are two essentially different methods : the steam method and the dry heat method. The typical Californian method is the dry heat. Typical Californians never heard of producing steam by pouring cold water on hot stones. This steam method (with the small, we may even say diminutive hut of skins, mats, or blankets stretched over a frame of willow wands, in which the "bather" sits, or rather crouches), is found today in great use among the Pit Rivers, the Klamath-Modocs, and also among the Paiutes. But careful inquiry brings out the fact that the introduction is recent. "It came about forty years ago, from up north, from the Warm Spring Indians" is the reply I have received from many people. The Pits, in the early days, when they wanted to sweat, made a big fire in the winter-house, men and women dancing and shouting around it, and then everybody rushed out and jumped in the river. As for the Paiutes, they say that they simply never sweated before. It seems that even now the custom is not well established, and that some of the old men frown on it.

Clothing.

291 The clothing is essentially like that of the Plains area in contrast to the Californian clothing, or rather absence of clothing. Thus the men wore trousers or leggings of the chapparreras type, of buckskin, with fringes, and likewise a buckskin shirt with fringed sleeves. The leggings were also used by the Pit Rivers, but, it would appear, more rarely. The shirt was even less customary among them. The natural adjunct of the chaparreras type of trousers is the breech-clout, passing from front to back between the thighs, and held in place by a gee-string. Both tribes made use of the breech-clout. But it is significant that, at the same time, the loin-cloth, i. e. a sort of kilt or apron, was used by both as an alternative. There is a technical name for both kinds of clothing in each tribe. The statement of informants is that "some men wore it that way, some men wore it the other way". Now a loin-cloth with chaparreras is quite inconceivable. They do not go together. This indicates, to my mind, that men sometimes wore the Plains costume, which was only a recent acquisition (say a couple of generations), but that the conservative and less in fashion still adhered to the original California-Basin mode of wearing nothing but a kilt.

N 285 [488] made for temporary use, especially to transport fish, and were often hurriedly made for an unexpected use, then thrown away once the food had arrived safely to camp. Sa: - (JM). Wa: + (Smith, notes).

W [285] 1039a. K2: DM did not know where "old-timers" got basketry material. Wa: Dark brown and black obtained from bracken-fern roots. These are buried before use.

W [285] 1040a. Paviotso: "Shoots dyed black by burial in mud" (Curtis, 70). Kū: AL said willow was dyed brown or black just by burying in any ground near Fallon. Color depended on time material was left in ground. Sa, Tg: Informants said willow dyed black by leaving in hot mud.

Basket Weaving

It is interesting that the relative abundance of modern Northern Paiute weaves is just opposite to that of the basketry found in Lovelock Cave, near the center of the Paiute area. Wicker, denied being known by informants, was the most

N [174] common type in the cave; coiled ware, considered a recent innovation by the Paiute and less made than twined ware, was second in total number of pieces found in the cave; twined ware, considered by informants as the only true Paiute ware and still much more frequently seen in Northern Paiute basketry collections, was anciently only about a third as common as coiled ware and a tenth as common as wicker.

N [172] 1048b. Lovelock Cave: 1115 pieces of wicker work were found (Loud, pls. 27-28, and p. 60). A small piece of wicker basketry which I obtained from Humboldt Cave was shown to all but one informant. All denied Paiute use of the technique.

1049. Paviotso: "All Paviotso baskets are made by the twining process, ..." (Curtis, 15:70). Ki: BA said, when the technique was discussed, that coil technique was used but he denied that any specific basket was coiled when questioned concerning the several types. The younger men thought coiling a Paiute practice.

N [177 172] Coiling recent introduction (Kelly, 120).

1051-1055. Lovelock Cave: + (Loud, 65).

1052. Kū: - (AL).

1053. Kū: - (AL).

1056. Paviotso: "I observed a Paviotso woman proceeding from left to right, i.e., clockwise, in sewing a small, semiglobular coiled basket" (Lowie, 233).

1056-1057. Most of my informants were men and so probably did not know the intricacies of basketmaking; however, I tried to supplement their statements by asking the women. Ordinarily, all were unconscious of a fixed procedure and said individuals differed.

1057. Lovelock Cave: + (Loud, 66).

N [124] 1057a. K1: A small piece of split-stitch coiling from the 1936 University excavation of Humboldt Cave near Lovelock was shown to informant, and the method of its manufacture was dem-

6: Wheeler-Voegelin E-4 (no date) 1955-56
NR13 Northern Paiute NR13
Upper Chinook NR23

N U 648 157. A Snake Indian, a member of Panai'na's party, had treacherously murdered the Wasco leader Queapama as he advanced, unarmed, to meet Panai'na for a peace talk (Thompson, ibid., pp. 51-53).

N 789 158. A superstition generally current among many of the Oregon Indian groups at this time was attached to Panai'na — namely, that he was bullet-proof (Thompson, ibid., pp. 53-54). For the general currency of this belief see NA. WDC. DC. 1054-DC-1874. Frank C. Wheaton to A.A.A.General, DC, Camp Warner, N [756] Ore., May 6, 1873: "Oche-ho [see fn. 94] cannot be convinced today that a bullet shot at his chief medicine man would harm or injure him in any way, and only a few weeks since he kept a party N of incredulous Klamaths waiting three days at his camp while his [776] Medicine Man was arranging with the Great Spirit to catch all bullets fired at him.

N "I believe this superstition to be general and deeply rooted a- [171] mong Indians in Southern Oregon, and have been told that it origi- [174] nated with the Cayuse & Coeur D'alene Bands."

159. See p. 114 and fn. 131.

160. Camp Maury was not a permanent post (WR, pt. 1, p. 330).

N 648 726 161. WR, pt. 1, pp. 337-338. Panai'na later confirmed Drake's report; in the fall of 1864 he told Capt. Wm. Kelly of Ft. Klamath that he "had been fighting the soldiers during the first part of the N summer, and was in the fight in which Lieut. Watson was killed, [712] and that he was at the Indian Fort or stone fortification afterwards" (NA. WDC. DP. K-77, K-30, 1864. Wm. Kelly to E. P. Waite, Ft. Klamath, Nov. 10, 1864).

162. WR, pt. 1, pp. 331, 333, 338, 341.

N 701 159 163. Panai'na's abilities impressed both military and Indian Office personnel. Huntington considered him the Snakes' "most celebrated war chief and their most efficient leader"; Meacham says Panai'na was "probably the most daring and successful leader the Snake Indians ever had" (RCIA 1867 [CDS #1326] p. 73; Meacham, Wigwam, p. 215).

164. WR, pt. 1, p. 341.

165. WR, pt. 2, pp. 878-879.

166. Drew, Official Report, pp. 6, 30.

Wadátkuht

000 regions outside their recognized territory.

132 Winter temperatures can be extreme in the Honey Lake area with temperatures occasionally falling as low as -20°F in the vicinity of the winter villages of the Wadátkuht. Summer temperatures can exceed 100°F for short periods. Fields of snow often remain on the crest of the Sierra until June, occasionally until August, and snow can be heavy on the valley floor in the winter. Also in the winter Honey Lake Valley may be filled with a dense fog which will remain for several weeks. This same fog shrouded area in the summer, particularly around Honey Lake, may be subjected to choking, blinding dust storms of considerable magnitude. Despite this [137] seemingly harsh environment the Wadátkuht were very fortunate [133] to have groves of oak trees within their territory. They also were fortunate to have Honey Lake and the network of swamps and sloughs of Susan River which attracted myriads of waterfowl to nest and feed. The Wadátkuht environment could be harsh, but it could also be bountiful.

THE HISTORIC PERIOD

175 The date of first contact by Europeans with the Honey [174] Lake Paiute may never be known with any exactness, but it can be assumed that some knowledge of the whites had been obtained by the last quarter of the 18th century. The existence of the Spanish after their founding of the mission at what is now San Francisco in 1776 was certainly known to Indian groups even as remote as the Honey Lake Paiute. Visits by Europeans into the general region are recorded as first having occurred in 1829 when Peter Skene Ogden made a trip west from Salt Lake to northwestern Nevada in that year. In 1830 he traveled from the Columbia River to the Colorado River on a route which lay to the east of the Sierra Nevada. His exact route is not known but it may have been through Nevada rather than in California along the east margin of the Sierra Nevada (Elliott, 1920). There can be little doubt that activities such as his were soon known to all groups neighboring the areas of penetration. It is thus probable that the Honey Lake people had heard rumors and tales of the white people for many years before they actually saw them. In fact, the coming of the whites was "foreseen" by Sanezha wahits, an old shaman. He sang for four or five nights and told the Honey Lake people that something was coming to their country, and that "some- [787] thing" was a white-skinned people. Because of this prediction the Wadátkuht were not too surprised to see the first white

Wadátkuht

133 Lake region prior to 1830. The exact location of this feature
103 has not as yet been obtained but it is located on, or near
[136] the shore of Honey Lake between Milford and Doyle. A buffalo trail is said to have left Honey Lake Valley and gone south through a gap in the Sierra, thus taking these large animals into Maidu or Washo territory.

48. Wutsono ihd ("Whirlpool"). This name is given to Soldier Bridge which is located about 3/4 miles west of Litchfield at a place where the bridge on the old highway crossed Susan River (T29N/R14, on the line between Sections 15
[648] and 16). U. S. soldiers in the early contact period captured two Paiute men here and evidently dispatched them as the relatives never saw the men again. Wutsono ihd received its name from a whirlpool which is said to have occurred at that place in the river.

49. Wogokab ("Timbered"). The Sierra range on the southwest side of Honey Lake Valley is given this name.

[226] 50. Ak' wuhg^{o} ("Sucker"). Long Valley Creek has this
[251] name. This creek was an important source for suckers which were caught in large numbers and dried for winter use by the Wadatkuht and occasionally by the neighboring Washo and Maidu. Joaquin was born in Long Valley.

51. Kasawihnaid ("Takes His Pants Off"). This is the name given Parker Creek, a creek which flows into Baxter Creek and ultimately into Honey Lake. (For a further account of this name see the village named the same in a following section.)

VILLAGES AND CAMPS

361 Specific and detailed information concerning habitation
[182] sites of the Wadátkuht was particularly difficult to obtain.
[177] The primary reason for this is the fact that the strictly aboriginal pattern was disrupted circa 1850 and replaced by a modified habitation pattern which is discussed in a following section. Although new camps and villages sprang up to conform to the dictates of the pioneer ranches and their locations, a number of the old camps and villages were still
361 occupied, at least to a certain extent. It is also to be
174 suspected that occasionally a new habitation was located upon an ancient or archaeological site, thus making the picture even more complex. This interdigitation of patterns and lack

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361 of strict temporal control does not allow for the reconstructio
of the Wadátkuht habitation pattern for any specific time in
[174] the past. It has been possible, however, to get a moderately clear picture of Wadátkuht life from just pre-1850 to about 1925.

It must be kept in mind that but a few of the following villages and camps were occupied by Wadátkuht groups at the same time. Most, and possibly all habitation sites were only occupied seasonally. The Wadátkuht, similar to the other [221] Great Basin people, made seasonal rounds of hunting and gathering. These people would, however, usually return "home" for the winter. A "permanent" or winter village is termed nogat by the Wadátkuht. The village of Matá is the only village so termed by my informants, although other winter villages may by definition be given this term.

It has been difficult to decide which of the following named habitation sites were villages and which were camps. Except in a few clear-cut cases the differentiation is not [114] apparent. For the purposes of this ethnogeographic study the terms "village" and "camp" are considered to be synonomous unless otherwise noted.

103 The names for habitation sites, like those for the physiographic featues, appear to be primarily descriptive. Some names are descriptive of some action that takes place, or had taken place. One thing of importance to be kept in mind concerning names for habitation sites is that a specific name given may not necessarily apply to a single, well delimited camp or village. A section of a stream a mile or more in length may have but a single name but contain a number of distinct archaeological sites, some of which must be considered as historic due to the occurrence of contact artifacts. The informants themselves confirm this situation by occasionally giving a name that applies to a generalized habitation area rather than to a specific localized site. The following Wadátkuht habitation sites are given with pertinent data for each.

103 1. Kasawihnaid ("Takes His Pants Off"). This village
361 site is located on the south side of Highway 395 where it crosses Parker Creek (T28N/R13E/SE¼ of NW¼ of Section 15). The name for this village is recent, that is, after contact times because it refers to the action of the white bachelor who had his house there. This pioneer man on occasion would remove his trousers and attempt to catch the Paiute girls

9: d'Azevedo et al. E-4,5 (1952-1961) 1963 NT20 Washo NT20

Northern Paiute NR13 ●

History and Ecology

N 648

It is significant that the instigators of hostile action against the white man were not Paiutes, although these peoples appear to have experienced a rather extreme deprivation at the time. The leaders of the first war raids were Shoshoni and Bannock, or Paiute offspring of intertribal matings. The reason for the presence of these sojourners is unclear but the subsequent history of intertribal relationships in the Basin reveals, in addition to fighting, a great deal of visiting, intermarriage and trade among Basin groups, particularly those speaking Shoshonean languages. It is my contention that these relationships were based in a previous ecological commonality shared by the peoples of the northern Basin and Plateau, rather than on linguistic ties.

N [563]

N W [182]

The hypothesis of a common ecology is based on the earlier distribution of bison in the Great Basin, particularly in northern Nevada. Since much of the argument of this paper is based upon the assumption that buffalo did at one time exist here it would be advisable to examine the evidence for such distribution.

N W 136 182

Archeological and ethnographic studies have produced, incidentally to their major concerns, some evidence for the relatively recent presence of bison in northeastern California (Riddell, 1952) and northwestern Utah (Steward, 1937) but no indisputable evidence for their existence in Nevada. However, the evidence supplied by zoologists and natural historians seems to demonstrate that the buffalo did at one time, perhaps until as late as the first quarter of the last century, exist in Nevada.

N W 114 136 174 182 ●

Allen (1877) cites evidence of the recent presence of the bison from northern Utah to northern California and states unequivocally that the probable range of the bison as late as the 1820's extended to the Sierra Nevada. After an ambitious but admittedly incomplete search of historic material as well as a voluminous correspondence with missionaries, government officials, pioneer settlers, and others, he argues that the area between 40° N latitude and 39° N latitude marked the southern limit of the westward range of the bison. This line passes through the northern tip of what seems to have been Washo territory. However, at that latitude Washo occupations appear to have been in the higher elevations not normally occupied by bison. Allen's arguments are supported by Hornaday (1887), Garretson (1938) and Seton (1928, 646-7). Steward presents a map (1938, 14) showing a southern limit for buffalo almost to Humboldt Sink in A. D. 1500.

Hall (1946, 644) lists the bison among those species that might possibly have occurred in Nevada but for which satisfactory evidence is lacking.

N W 136 174 182 114

Zoological evidence tends to corroborate such secondary evidence as geographic locations with "buffalo" names and the traditions reported by Indian informants (Steward, 1938, 14).

Roe (1951, 282) felt the evidence did not justify establishing the western range of the bison in California. However, it would seem his caution is no longer called for in view of Riddell's information. Haines (1940) argues that the bison was not present in California and far western Nevada, but in light of later evidence and because of the limitations of his own argument it seems justifiable to discount his position. Haines accepted only historic documentation and discounted the opinions of zoologists and naturalists as well as some admittedly scanty but nonetheless real ethnographic suggestions. Having found no documentation, he was then forced to explain away Indian tradition and the existence of bison skulls. This he did with two separate and contrived suppositions (Haines, 1940, 397-8). Not only does he convert negative evidence into positive evidence, he attempts to explain away existing positive evidence in order to support assumptions based on negative evidence. Considering the nature of the evidence available it would seem that the only truly valid argument against bison's existing in the area would be one put forth by a biologist that it was impossible on ecological grounds for bison to have existed there. To my knowledge no such argument has been advanced. Thus it would seem, after an examination of the existing positive evidence, drawn from history, zoology, archeology and ethnography, that it was highly probable that the bison ranged from northwestern Utah to northeastern California down to 40° N latitude in comparatively recent times.

N 224 182

If we add the bison to the ecological picture previously painted for the Paiute we can postulate a far more rewarding subsistence level than was known in post-Caucasian times. The pursuit of buffalo, and the common patterns of gathering suggest that the relationships of the Shoshonean-speaking peoples were closely connected to their common ecology. However, by perhaps 1800 or shortly afterward the bison had disappeared from Nevada except possibly for small groups. This disappearance created an area of ecological imbalance in the southern portion of what had been the bison range. The Paiutes of this area were forced to seek alternatives to the buffalo and were probably oriented in the direction the buffalo had retreated. This may explain in part why the numerically inferior Washo were able to maintain themselves surrounded by the Paiute. The points of friction in the Pine Nut Mountains seem to be the only evidence of Paiute attempts to encroach on Washo subsistence save for occasional hunting and fishing forays into the Sierras.

N W [94]

N 231 177

The introduction of the horse into the Basin in the late 18th century, through the agency of Comanche-Shoshoni trade (Ewers, 1954, 11) gave the